

approval of the president to the states, the states can call special conventions or have their state Legislatures scrutinize the amendment. So you don't even have to get together in one place to do this. To become part of the Constitution, this clause requires that any proposed amendment must be ratified by three-fourths of the state Legislatures or their state conventions. To date this is the only procedure that has been used to amend the Constitution. What generally happens is states make application to Congress for a constitutional convention. When they get close to having the amount of states that they need to call for one, Congress generally capitulates and adopts whatever amendment it is, what specific amendment it is, so there has never been a convention of the states. Okay, to go on, on the ratification process, so far the governing principle seems to be that when any of the state Legislatures take the step of ratifying, it has exercised its constitutional authority and can do nothing further. So once you ratify something you can't go back and change it. Others contend that any state may change its mind so long as the matter has not been finalized by having three-fourths of the states. It has been held that the states cannot refer a proposed amendment to a popular vote, you can't hand it out to the people. The Constitution permits ratification only by state legislators or by a special convention. This...this is interesting to me because what it says to me is there still is some confusion on the process that...on the constitutional convention, because it's never been used. It has never been used in all the time that it's been available. So every time the states have gone to Congress to make an application and gotten close to having enough states to call a convention, they've gone ahead and adopted whatever amendment it was, and then it's been sent back for ratification to the states. The whole idea of the Conference of States turning into a constitutional convention would have to be, as Senator Kristensen says, ratified by the states, which is still a possibility. We're still asking to start a process here, as Senator Chambers said, that could eventually adopt ideas to...or amendments to the Constitution of the United States. And since it's never been done before, I haven't even had Senator Kristensen really answer some of the questions, and I've been...you know, I've looked at constitutional books. Here's one that we've been looking at down in my office and trying to get some idea of how this actually is done. And it says because it's never been successfully invoked, the convention method of amendment is surrounded by a lengthy list of questions.